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ABSTRACT

This study examined the adaptation of institutions of higher education in the United States and Europe to changing socioeconomic factors and proposed a theory of adaptation in higher education which stresses the need for new forms of governance, management, and leadership structures. The study analyzed six university structures, each with a "distinctive" environment, over a four-year period using case study and grounded theory methodologies. The institutions were: (1) New York University, the largest private university in the world, which reinvented itself after severe financial problems in the 1970s; (2) the University of Michigan, a large public university challenged by ethnic diversity and racial tensions; (3) the University of California at Berkeley, confronted with a major financial crisis through the restructuring of the California legal and economic system; (4) Universitat St. Gallen (Switzerland), which has a history of adapting effectively to regional needs for focused training; (5) Universita Bocconi, a private university in Italy with strong entrepreneurial and adaptive structures; and (6) Wirtschaftsuniversitat Wien (Austria), which is facing a major organizational reform mandated by the government. Individual chapters address: the changing nature of the university environment, theories of organizational and higher education adaptation, design of the empirical study, the case studies, and a theory of adaptation in higher education. (Contains approximately 300 references.) (DB)

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